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REPORT

BY

CONSUL AND ACTING COMMISSIONER SHARPE

ON THE

TRADE AND GENERAL CONDITION OF THE BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA PROTECTORATE,

FROM

APRIL 1, 1896, TO MARCH 31, 1897.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
July 1897.

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Report by Consul and Acting Commissioner Sharpe on the Trade and General Condition of the British Central Africa Protectorate, from April 1, 1896, to March 31, 1897.

Population.

THERE has been no great change during the past year in the population of the Protectorate, either European, Indian, or native. A certain amount of moving about of natives over our border is always taking place: sometimes those who live in other territories will move into British territory, or those who previously dwelt in the Protectorate will emigrate to other spheres.

Some census taking has been carried out in different districts, the most elaborate one having been made by Mr. R. Codrington, the Collector for Central Angoniland.

Mr. Codrington has obtained the exact number of houses within an extent of about one-third of his district, the population, at three persons to the hut, being 98,691. The remaining portions of Central Angoniland are fully as populous as that over which Mr. Codrington's census was taken, and I estimate the whole district as probably containing over 200,000 inhabitants. This would seem to show, therefore, that possibly our previous estimates of the population of this Protectorate may be somewhat under the mark.

The number of Europeans has slightly increased, and is now a little over 300.

Indian traders continue to settle in the Shiré River districts and in Blantyre, and are developing a considerable trade in native products.

Health.

The year 1896–97 has not been a good one for health amongst Europeans, as will be shown by the following Medical Report by Dr. Wordsworth Poole.

Report on the Health of the British Central Africa Protectorate during the Year 1896–97, *by Dr. Wordsworth Poole.*

European Population.

Death Rate.—During the past year twenty-one deaths, from all causes, have been registered in the Protectorate, as compared with twenty-eight in the previous year. This number does not include the deaths which have occurred on the Zambezi, of former residents in the Protectorate, who were leaving the country. By including these cases the total death-rate, from all causes, is about 8 per cent.

"*Blackwater*" *Fever.*—Of this total, "Blackwater," or hæmoglobinuric fever, is responsible for exactly one-third.

Further experience of this disease shows that it is erroneous to regard it as attacking only those who, from various debilitating causes, are unable to resist this pernicious form of fever. Young and vigorous men leading sound lives have succumbed.

This disease, too, has been rather more prevalent than usual, and has made its appearance at stations formerly regarded as amongst the most healthy.

Fort Johnston.—At Fort Johnston, amongst quite a small population, four deaths

from pernicious fevers have taken place, three of the victims being members of the Administration attached to the Naval Department. In other ways, too, this station has proved itself unsuitable for habitation.

Zomba.—In Zomba, also, where "Blackwater" fever was rare, several cases have occurred.

Lower River.—The residents on the Lower River and Chinde still present a healthy record, the deaths which have taken place there being, with few exceptions, those of persons on their way to and from the Protectorate.

The most unhealthy period of the year appears to be the three months immediately following the rainy season, when the large marshy tracts are drying up.

Native Population.

A large body of natives collected round a European settlement always presents grounds for uneasiness. Acute contagious diseases are liable to break out, and, owing to the uncleanliness of the native, prove a menace to the white population.

Epidemic of Dysentery.—During the commencement of the rainy season in 1896 a serious epidemic of dysentery broke out amongst the civil and military carriers at Zomba, spreading amongst the native troops, and affecting also the Europeans.

The outbreak was due to the influx of Atonga, Angoni, Wankonde, Achipeta, and Wabisa carriers from the lake, already infected with the disease.

During the month of December forty-one natives were admitted into the Civil Hospital for dysentery, sixteen of whom died. Besides these many suffered who did not come under treatment, and the disease spread to the neighbouring villages and plantations.

A subsequent attack of this nature might be warded off in the future by examining the incoming gangs of labourers before they cross the Upper Shiré, holding back any who presented dysentery symptoms.

Chicken-pox.—At another period there was a mild epidemic of chicken-pox amongst the prisoners brought down from the north end of the lake and quartered at Zomba.

For the rest, the native patients have presented their usual characteristics in illness, succumbing readily to acute diseases, but bearing injury and operations extremely well.

Sikh Contingent.—The record of the Sikh contingent has been exceedingly good, very few deaths, and but little sickness having occurred.

(Signed) W. Poole,
Principal Medical Officer.

Imports.

Trade.—The value of goods imported into British Central Africa is slightly less than it was in 1895–96, being 70,754*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.* as compared with 71,760*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.*, as shown by the following Tables:—

Port Herald.

(From April 1, 1896, to March 31, 1897.)

Imports.	Quantity.	Value.
		£ s. d.
Arms and ammunition	500 rounds ..	3 18 0
Alcohol	11 cases ..	15 12 0
Hardware	..	177 19 8
Provisions	..	389 8 2
Soft goods	..	869 6 11
Free goods	..	130 10 6
Sundries	..	211 15 5
Total	..	1,798 10 8

CHIROMO.

(From April 1, 1896, to March 31, 1897.)

Imports.	Quantity.	Value.
		£ s. d.
Arms and ammunition	G 245 R 46 A 141	2,318 6 6
Alcohol...	2,893	3,163 6 0
Provisions	9,487	7,564 13 5
Hardware	7,468	5,936 17 1
Soft goods	4,353	32,488 6 1
Free goods	3,234	9,513 11 3
Sundries	10,137	6,670 19 6
Total	..	67,755 19 10

KOTA KOTA.

(From April 1, 1896, to March 31, 1897.)

Imports.	Quantity.	Value.
		£
Sundries	..	1,200

	£ s. d.
Port Herald (total imports)	1,798 10 8
Chiromo (total imports)	67,755 19 10
Kota Kota (total imports)	1,200 0 0
The British Central Africa Administration also imported goods to the value of	9,300 0 0
Thus making the total value of goods imported	80,054 10 6
As compared with 82,760*l.* last year.	

Thus, the total trade of the Protectorate in 1896–97 in imports shows a slight apparent decrease.

The importation of specie has however considerably increased. The following amounts have been brought into the country:—

IMPORT of Specie.

Importer.	Kind.	Value.
		£
African Lakes Corporation	Gold	3,500
	Silver.. ..	4,000
British Central Africa Administration	Silver.. ..	4,000
	Copper ..	100
Various..	..	500*
Total	..	12,100

The import of specie during the previous year was a little under 10,000*l.* Thus the total value of imports (including specie) 92,154*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.* during the past year, as compared with a little over 92,000*l.* last year.

The imports of this Administration during 1895–96 consisted largely of military

* Approximately.

outfit for the Indian force, the value of goods from India being some 5,000*l.* During the year now under review these imports only amounted to 1,300*l.*

In comparing the respective values of different classes of goods imported in 1896–97 with the imports of the previous year, there is a slight diminution under the heading "Arms and Ammunition" (from 3,100*l.* to 2,300*l.*).

"Alcohol" remains almost the same as in the year 1895–96.

"Provisions" has decreased from 13,000*l.* to 7,000*l.*

"Hardware" has also decreased from 11,000*l.* to nearly 6,000*l.*

"Soft goods" remains almost exactly the same, viz., 32,500*l.*

"Free goods" have risen from 1,500*l.* to 9,500*l.*, and

"Sundries" from 4,000*l.* to 6,600*l.*

The cause of "free goods" having so largely risen is that towards the end of the year 1895–96 Commissioner Sir Harry Johnston, with the sanction of the Foreign Office, excepted a number of articles, such as machinery, agricultural implements, &c., from the payment of import duty. This accounts for the apparent (but not actual) decrease in "Hardware."

Exports.

Port Herald.

(From April 1, 1896, to March 31, 1897.)

Exports.	Quantity.	Value.		
	Lbs.	£	*s.*	*d.*
Ivory	189½	77	5	6
Hippopotamus' teeth	138	5	3	6
Oil seeds	..	521	5	6
Beeswax	..	139	17	6
Rhinoceros' horns	101	5	1	0
Sundries	..	139	13	4
Total	..	888	6	4

Chiromo.

(From April 1, 1896, to March 31, 1897.)

Exports.	Quantity.	Value.		
	Lbs.	£	*s.*	*d.*
Coffee	762,382	16,426	12	1
Ivory	16,333¾	4,652	13	5
Hippopotamus' teeth	1,490½	68	17	3
Beeswax	2,401	61	11	0
Oil seeds	83,170	153	19	6
Rhinoceros' horns	262½	13	1	0
Rubber	5,667	276	15	6
Mealies	19,480	57	5	0
Total	..	21,710	14	9

KOTA KOTA.

(From April 1, 1896, to March 31, 1897.)

Exports.	Quantity.	Value.
		£
Ivory	..	700

	£	s.	d.
Total exports	23,299	1	1
Total value of year's trade, less specie imported	103,353	11	7

The total value of the exports from the British Central Africa Protectorate during the previous year amounted to 19,668*l.*, a large proportion of which, viz., 11,530*l.*, was ivory. Consequently, there has been an increase of exports during the year just ended of about 3,530*l.* During the year 1896–97 the export of ivory amounted to 5,429*l.* A much larger amount has passed through the Protectorate in transit from other spheres, which has not been included in these export Returns. In the Protectorate of British Central Africa itself there is very little ivory produced, the bulk of what has previously been exported coming from the Tanganyika regions. Ivory is an export which constantly fluctuates, and I do not look forward in the future to any increase in the ivory export from this Protectorate. There will probably be a decrease.

A great increase has taken place in the value of coffee exported, which is 9,290*l.* more than it was the previous year. In the year 1895–96 the value of coffee exported was 7,136*l.* During the year just ended it has reached 16,426*l.* This article of export will be largely increased during the year now commencing, and there is every prospect of its increasing every successive year for some time to come.

There has been a marked increase in the export of oil seeds on the Lower River from 290*l.* to 685*l.* This trade is entirely carried on by Indian merchants who have settled at Port Herald, Chiromo, and Chikwawa, and I believe there is a prospect of its increasing.

Rubber, which was exported during the previous year only to the value of 28*l.*, has this year risen to 276*l.* On the other hand, the drug strophanthus as an export has entirely disappeared.

Beeswax, which during the previous year was exported to the value of 47*l.*, has risen to 100*l.* Most of these small exports are in the hands of the Indian traders.

The cultivation of fibre is being developed in the Mlanje district by an English firm.

Tobacco, which was grown with some success by the late firm of Buchanan Brothers, has been neglected during the past year, and does not figure as an article of export.

With regard to minerals, although a number of Companies have been carrying on operations in the British South Africa Company's sphere lying west of the Protectorate, little has been done in the Protectorate itself, and practically we know nothing as yet of the mineral wealth of this part of Africa.

Postal Service.—The postal service has shown an increase and the postal system has been extended. In a short Return furnished to me by Vice-Consul R. C. Fulke Greville, who, during the greater part of the year 1896, was acting as Postmaster-General, it is stated that the increase in the amount of postal matter carried during the past year by the Department has exceeded expectations.

The Ocean service between Chinde and Europe has remained unsatisfactory, as we still have no steamers calling at fixed dates.

The following Table will show the increase in the amount of postal matter carried during the year 1896 as compared with 1895 :—

TABLE showing Mail Matter passing through the Postal Department of the British Central Africa Protectorate during the year ended December 31, 1896.

Year.	Inwards.					Outwards.					Totals.
	Parcels.	Registered Letters.	Ordinary Letters.	Postcards.	Newspapers and Book Packets.	Parcels.	Registered Letters.	Ordinary Letters.	Postcards.	Newspapers and Book Packets.	
1896..	571	1,328	36,271	673	32,240	213	2,018	17,960	1,880	6,500	99,654
1895..	457	1,232	12,624	496	4,386	157	1,552	1,098	604	2,194	29,802
Increase	114	96	23,647	177	27,854	56	466	16,862	1,276	4,306	69,852

(Signed) R. C. FULKE GREVILLE,
Acting Postmaster-General.

General Post Office, Blantyre, January 1, 1897.

Steamers on Lakes and Rivers.

The Shiré River channel, from which the snags were cleared last year, has been navigable all the year round. There has been far more water in the Shiré this year than there has been for twelve or fifteen years back. This is due to Lake Nyasa being at a considerably higher level all last year than it has been since European settlement first took place in British Central Africa. At the present date, Lake Nyasa is higher even than it was at the end of the 1895–96 rainy season; and it is probable that the Shiré River will cause no difficulty to navigation whatsoever during the coming dry season.

During the past year steamers have had no difficulty in reaching Chiromo at all times. The smaller shallow-draft steamers have also been able to run up to Katunga and Chikwara.

The new steamer belonging to the African Lakes Corporation, the "Sir Harry Johnston," has proved a great success. She is a comfortable river steamer, and has transported large quantities of cargo as well as passengers.

The "Lady Nyasa," a paddle steamer belonging to the same Corporation, was recently lost in Chinde Harbour.

On the Upper Shiré a new steamer has been placed by the African Lakes Corporation, called the "Monteith." She is a shallow-draft, stern-wheel steamer, aud has proved thoroughly suitable for the work between Matope and Fort Johnston.

On Lake Nyasa there have been no new steamers built during the present year. A large vessel is, however, now being constructed by the African Lakes Corporation, to be called the "Victoria," to carry on the Company's traffic on the lake. She is a far larger boat than any at present existing on Lake Nyasa.

There is still only one steam-boat on Lake Tanganyika, the "Good News," which also belongs to the African Lakes Corporation. I am informed, however, that a German Association will shortly place on that lake two small steamers.

General Condition of the Protectorate.

Chikusi Campaign.—During the past year the only war troubles in this Protectorate have been a short campaign against the Angoni-Zulu people under Chikusi. This Chief occupied the high country lying immediately west of the Shiré River, and south-west of the south end of Lake Nyasa. The Angoni are a mixed race, descended partly from the Zulus who crossed the Zambesi River, about half a century ago, and occupied the high portions of the plateau land lying west of Lake Nyasa, mixed with native blood—Achewa, Achipeta, &c.

Chikusi's people themselves, although they have adopted Zulu war customs, and have constantly raided weaker tribes around them, had no unfriendly feelings towards the Europeans of the Shiré Highlands.

Chikusi himself, however, and a number of his turbulent young Headmen, were opposed to our influence. From time to time difficulties arose, and in October 1896 raids were made by Chikusi in person in the country lying between the Shiré River and the hills. Mission stations were entered, a large number of natives killed, and numbers of villages were burnt, as well as quantities of captives made and carried away. This necessitated an expedition, which was carried out under Captain Stewart and Captain Manning in the month of October. Chikusi's head kraal was promptly taken, his force defeated, and the country quickly reduced to order.

At the present date, I am glad to say that the Angoni with whom we were fighting in October are on the best of terms with us. Something like 5,000 are at present at work for wages in the Shiré Highlands, and numbers of the Sub-Chiefs have come down from the plateau and obtained planting land in the Upper Shiré district, where they have settled, and are forming a useful and industrious population. Mr. F. J. Whicker, the Collector for the Upper Shiré district, who has acquired a great influence with these people, has, at the moment of writing this Report, sent in information that Malenjeni (the mother) and Mandala (the brother) of Chikusi are at Liwonde with a large number of Indunas talking over various questions of land settlement.

With the exception of this short campaign the year has been a peaceful one, and progress has been evident everywhere.

Native Hut Tax.—The native hut tax has been readily accepted by the whole population from North Nyasa to the Lower Shiré. The estimate for the amount to be expected in revenue from this source during the past year has been doubled, and this tax should form a large item in the future revenue of the country.

The natives are beginning to fully understand the value of a tax receipt. They are grasping the fact that the possession of it frees them from the oppression of their Chiefs. During the past year there has been a marked diminution of the autocratic power formerly held by native Chiefs throughout the Protectorate.

Use of British Currency.—Perhaps one of the greatest changes, and I think I may say advances, during 1896–97 has been the greatly increased use of British currency. Whereas two years ago shillings and sixpences were unknown beyond Blantyre itself, and not fully understood even by the natives there, now, to the northern limit of this Protectorate, British silver is in circulation.

In early endeavours to introduce currency into this Protectorate the only available coin was the rupee, and this was largely introduced at first. Some two years ago, however, Sir Harry Johnston, in order to get rid of the rupee and to introduce British silver in its place, fixed the local value at 18½ to the pound sterling, and this speedily had the result of ridding the country of rupees. At the present date they are hardly ever seen.

Even in the North Nyasa district labourers prefer to be paid in coin.

The Yaos thoroughly appreciate having a currency. It has proved, in fact, a great step towards civilizing the native of this part of Africa. He is now able to accumulate his earnings, which formerly, in the days of a calico currency, was an impossibility. He can, moreover, hide his wealth. Many native workers in the Blantyre district have stores of money hidden away, or in the bank. I have received a number of applications from well-to-do natives for the purchase of blocks of Government land of aboat 100 acres each. A considerable number of natives have bought land, paid for it, and received formal transfers. Most of these are, of course, the more than usually intelligent natives, who have realized the profits to be made from coffee planting.

Locusts.—Locusts, which did so much harm in the year 1895–96, have disappeared from many parts of the Protectorate during the past year. In limited areas they have done some damage, but they may be said to be dying out, and I hope this year will see this part of Africa free from them altogether.

Trade with Tanganyika.—The African Lakes Corporation have been extending their trade up both shores of Lake Tanganyika, which they have been enabled to do by means of their steamer, the "Good News." The manager of the Corporation informs me that he is shortly going to establish a station at Ujiji, and probably one at the north end of Tanganyika, in German or Belgian territory. The Corporation also intend placing a boat on the Chambezi River, which, taking its rise on the Nyasa–Tanganyika plateau, flows through the Awemba country into Lake Bangweolo, and is said to be a navigable stream throughout. Should this be the case, it will not be a difficult matter to open up the territories inhabited by the Awemba, a tribe who have always had a somewhat bad name in British Central Africa.

Rinderpest.—The Protectorate has not during the past year been visited by rinderpest. This disease, when passing from the north to the south of Africa, fortunately left Nyasaland and the Shiré Highlands practically untouched, except that it swept off nearly all of the cattle at the north end of Lake Nyasa. Recently, however, rinderpest appeared at Tete, and fearing it might from there reach the Shiré Highlands, I published Regulations and issued stringent Rules to prevent the importation of any cattle or domestic animals from Portuguese territory, and more especially into the Shiré Highlands. In addition to prohibiting the import from over the Anglo-Portuguese boundary, I took the Shiré River as an inner line of defence, and established posts along its whole length from its exit from Lake Nyasa to the junction with the Ruo River. By this means, I have been able to entirely control the movements of cattle into the Shiré Highlands. Recently, finding that the whole of the Protectorate and of Angoniland was entirely free from any taint of cattle disease, I have withdrawn the prohibition, except that for the present no cattle are allowed to enter British territory, either from Portuguese territory or from the British South Africa Company's sphere. I hope soon to be able to withdraw these restrictions also.

Indian Immigration.—A number of the Indian troops serving in this Protectorate have recently asked to be allowed, at the expiration of their term of service, to settle in British Central Africa. Should their wishes be carried out, they propose to send to India for their wives and families. All these men have put by considerable sums of money and are agriculturists. Their desire is to cultivate wheat and to manufacture it into flour, for which there is a ready sale in the country at remunerative prices. They also propose to undertake transport work by means of bullock-carts. I have not gone into the question seriously yet, but this might be the commencement of an Indian settlement with considerable possibilities.

Telegraph Construction.—There has been an extension of telegraph construction, carried out entirely by the African Trans-Continental Telegraph Company. The Company's line, which runs up from Mashonaland to Tete, has still a portion of its length north of Salisbury uncompleted, but it is hoped that this will be finished within the next three or four months. From Tete upwards the line has proved useful. It is in good working order from that place to Blantyre, and thence to Zomba. From the latter place it has recently been carried on to Liwonde on the Upper Shiré, and thence to Fort Johnston at the south end of Lake Nyasa, to which point the line is now open. The survey has already been commenced from Fort Johnston up the west shores of the lake to the north end, and Major Forbes, who is in charge of the Company's operations, hopes to have the line completed over a great portion of its length towards the north end of Lake Nyasa during the present dry season.

The Company have also a branch line from Chikwawa to Chiromo, which there connects with the Portuguese Government line from Chiromo to Chinde and Quilimane.

The Portuguese Government have with great liberality undertaken to pass all Government messages coming from this Protectorate over their lines between Chiromo and the coast free of charge. The African Trans-Continental Telegraph Company have also most generously agreed for the present to make no charge to this Administration for Government telegrams.

Horses.—A few horses have been imported from South Africa during the present year; and a large number are now being brought in by the British South Africa Company, who intend to send them up to the Tanganyika–Nyasa plateau.

Young horses which were born in the country are doing well. One which belongs to this Administration has been broken in at Zomba, and is a most useful and healthy little animal.

Preservation of Game.—Regulations* were passed in the month of September proclaiming a tract of country, locally known as the "Elephant Marsh," to be a game preserve. Within the limits of the defined preserve no shooting of game whatsoever is allowed without permission from the Commissioner. The carrying out of these Regulations has had an excellent effect. Buffalo, zebra, and other game, which were formerly hunted to death in the elephant marsh, are now free from molestation; and game from the Cholo hills have also come into the marsh, finding there a sanctuary. Recently a small troop of elephants was seen there, a thing which has not occurred since the year 1889; and I have great hopes that by strictly carrying out the clauses of the Regulations, we may have in a few years elephants wandering free and unmolested in the elephant marsh.

My views regarding the preservation of elephants in Africa are that the only possible way of controlling the unlimited slaughter of young elephants throughout the continent will be for all Powers owning territories in Africa to mutually agree to, and not only agree to, but conscientiously carry out certain rules, the chief to be that no export of tusks under, say, 14 lbs., shall be permitted from any port in Africa.

Traction Engine.—A traction engine was imported by the African Lakes Corporation some months ago, but has encountered difficulties in working on the roads of this Protectorate in their present condition. A great deal, however, has been done in the past twelve months in the way of road making and repairing, and at the present moment the chief road in the Protectorate, that from Katunga to Blantyre, is being entirely regraded, and the traction will, I hope, be of much value in hauling heavy weights from the Lower Shiré to the Highlands.

Roads.—During the past year all the funds at my disposition were fully expended for road making, and, although sufficing for the purpose of keeping in fairly good order the existent roads, the largely increased traffic over the main roads of the Protectorate (viz., from Katunga to Blantyre, from Blantyre to Matope, from Blantyre to Zomba) renders very considerable expenditure necessary. At the present moment, the road from Katunga, the head of navigation of the Shiré River, to Blantyre, is being largely remade, and in some parts an entirely fresh line is being taken in order to secure easier gradients. By this means the worst gradient is brought to one in twelve.

The road is being, for the first time since it was originally made, properly supplied with inside drains to catch the surface water coming down the mountains, and with culverts, and improved crossings over the streams are being made. I hope, before the end of the dry season, to get the whole of these main roads in thorough repair.

All other roads in the Protectorate have been distinguished from the main roads, and have been placed under District Road Boards. Each district has a certain sum of money

* These have since been amended and amplified.

allotted to it, and a Road Board is formed of the Collector of the district and two residents. This Board draws up its scheme for the year in the month of April, and expends the funds at its disposal for the most necessary purposes.

A good graded road has been made by this Administration to connect Karonga at the north end of Lake Nyasa with Fort Hill. From Fort Hill the British South Africa Company have carried on the road almost the whole way to Tanganyika, so that there is now, for the first time in history, a good broad road joining Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika, about 230 miles in length. This, I am informed by Mr. Best, the Collector at Fort Hill, is practicable for "horses or bicycles."

Railway.—The great need of the Protectorate at the present time is a railway to connect Chiromo with Blantyre, and eventually to go north from Blantyre viâ Zomba to the Upper Shiré and the lake. With the trade now existing in British Central Africa and the large increase of planting operations, a narrow-gauge railway would undoubtedly pay a dividend from the commencement.

Cultivation of Rice.—The cultivation of rice in Nyasaland has largely increased during the past year, principally at Kota Kota, on the south-west shore of Lake Nyasa. This was formerly the head-quarters of Jumbe, a coast Arab, who was friendly and loyal to this Administration. On his death, his successor, a young man, proved to be very unsatisfactory, and had to be deposed and deported. Since that time Kota Kota has been ruled by a Council of Headmen, acting under the directions of the European Collector for that district. Kota Kota has progressed most satisfactorily. During the year 1895-96 only a trifling quantity of rice was grown, possibly 10 tons or so. During the past year 130 tons were grown, and found a ready sale. The ground at present planted should bring in a crop of about 250 tons. At other places on Lake Nyasa suited to the growth of rice increased quantities have been grown. If there were only cheap transport from Lake Nyasa to the coast, large quantities of rice could be grown for export.

Coffee Cultivation.—For the following notes on the coffee industry of the Protectorate I am indebted to Mr. R. S. Hunter, manager of the firm of Buchanan Brothers, Mr. James Lindsay, manager for E. C. A. Sharrer, Mr. Jonathan Duncan, of the Upper Mudie Plantation, and Messrs. Lamagna and Co.

During the past year a considerable amount of new land has been opened out and planted with coffee. During the year 1897, the coffee crop should considerably exceed that of 1896, which was 340 tons. Estimates of the 1897 crop average from 400 to 450 tons for the whole Protectorate. Not many new planters have come into the country, nearly all the plantations newly commenced during the present year having been opened by old residents. The acreage freshly cleared and planted during the past year is estimated at about 2,000 acres, a large proportion of which has been done in the Cholo district. It is generally considered that the 1897 crop would have been much heavier than is now estimated to be had it not been for unprecedentedly dry and hot weather during the past blossoming season. This dry weather lasted for a considerable time in some districts. A few plantations also suffered from flights of locusts settling on the primaries and destroying flower and bud.

There is a general consensus of opinion among planters in the Protectorate that it will be beneficial to plant shade trees among the coffee, especially in those districts which have a short rainfall. Various shade trees have been largely planted in different districts of the Protectorate, amongst others, the *grevillea robusta;* also varieties of the *ficus* and *albizzia.*

Since the question as to whether shade will be beneficial or not to coffee in this Protectorate came up, I wrote to the Government of India in November last, at the request of the planters in this country, asking that I might, if possible, be supplied with some information as to what descriptions of shade trees were grown on coffee plantations in India.

I am informed by the Government of India that they are now collecting information for me on this question.

A large supply of labour during the last few months has been a gratifying feature in the coffee industry, as it tends to show that increased cultivation, so far from using up the labour supply, stimulates more workers to come in.

The improvement in the navigation of the Lower Shiré River which has taken place in 1896-97 has made it possible to ship coffee much more expeditiously and safely than during the previous years.

Mr. Lindsay informs me that the extensions on Mr. E. C. A. Sharrer's plantations during the past year amount to 300 acres, bringing the total acreage under cultivation for that firm to about 1,800 acres, one-third of which, however, has not yet reached the bearing stage, and a considerable proportion of the remainder being quite new.

The Nyasaland Coffee Company, whose properties are at Mlanje, have during the year opened up 160 acres, and I am informed that they contemplate opening up 700 or 800 acres more during the current year.

The firm of I. Lamagna and Co. obtained a crop of 40 tons from their Mpemba and Ntonda Hill estates, and the same trees that gave this crop have what is estimated to be a rather larger crop on them for the present year, and look healthy and strong. This firm expect 50 tons this year from those two estates. About 120 acres of fresh ground were opened by them at Mpemba and Ntonda. In addition to these two estates the same firm own the Portenope estate, a new one of 120 acres opened in 1896. On the slopes of Michiru Mountain they also own the Tumbulumbu estate, which last year gave a crop of 9 tons from 60 acres. This year the same estate is expected to give rather more. The Mwalamduzi estate at Cholo gave the same firm last year 6 tons, and 10 or 12 tons are expected during the present year. On their estate of Nkawa at Cholo they opened last year about 100 acres, and expect this year a small maiden crop of 4 tons from 4,000 plants which were put in in 1895. This firm informs me that there is no doubt that the export of coffee will show a great and steady progress from year to year.

Mr. Jonathan Duncan, the cultivator of the first coffee tree introduced into British Central Africa, informs me that the amount of coffee produced in this country will surely increase year by year, and that a large quantity of land is being opened up all over the country. He tells me that there is yet a great deal to be learned as regards the cultivation of coffee in Central Africa, and that without some knowledge it is a precarious undertaking. He looks forward to a great future for coffee in British Central Africa.

Native Labour.—The native labour question has progressed satisfactorily. The present system of all labourers being registered has worked well, and I think I may say that labourers have been well treated by their European employers. The most difficult point in the employment of large quantities of labourers in the Shiré Highlands is the feeding of them during the months of October, November, and December, when the old crops are finished and the new ones not ripe, and employers will require to devote attention to this food question, and if they wish to keep a constant labour supply, take steps to have food supplies stored on their estates.

At the present date labour is very plentiful, thousands of men having recently come from Central Angoniland, Southern Angoniland, West Nyasa, and the South Nyasa districts. I do not look forward to any scarcity of labour for coffee plantations, no matter what the extent of cultivation may be, as the Protectorate has the whole of Central Africa at its back to draw upon.

The rate of wages has not risen, and may be placed at 3*s.* per month per man, with food in addition. About Blantyre and Zomba the number of skilled labourers, carpenters, brickmakers, masons, clerks, and interpreters, &c., has increased; and it is now possible by sending out inquiries to obtain skilled labourers.

Armed Forces.—The armed forces in the Protectorate consists of 185 Sikhs and 800 native trained troops. In addition there are 200 district police. The following is a Report on the native forces by Lieutenant-Colonel Edwards, the Commandant of the armed forces in British Central Africa :—

Notes on the Native Soldiers of the British Central Africa Protectorate, by Lieutenant-Colonel Edwards.

The soldiers of the British Central Africa Rifles, numbering 720 rank and file, are recruited from three local tribes, viz., Atonga, Yaos, and Marimba men; several other tribes have been tried, but have not proved a success.

Atonga.—The Atonga, who were released from the thraldom of the Northern Angoni on the advent of the Free Church of Scotland mission to Bandawe, were first employed as irregular soldiers by the African Lakes Company in 1887, during their war with Mlozi and the Arabs at the north end of Lake Nyasa, and were favourably spoken of by Captain (now Major) Lugard and others who led them. They were not employed as soldiers by the British Central Africa Administration until the early part of 1893, when they took part in the expedition against Liwonde, having been hastily raised and armed on the spur of the moment. They showed such dash and pluck in that expedition that they were employed as irregulars in small bodies during the remaining expeditions of that year and 1894.

In 1895 they were enlisted for one year's service, trained as regulars for six months, and then took part in the expeditions of 1895–96, in which they thoronghly maintained their good reputation as brave soldiers.

There are now three companies of Atonga in the armed forces of the Protectorate, numbering 360 rifles (120 per company).

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Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj

on 31 October, 2019

Yaos.—The Yaos, of whom there are two companies, consisting of 240 rank and file, are recruited from the most warlike of the tribes of British Central Africa. They were the chief slave-raiders for the Arabs, and in consequence nearly all our expeditions from 1891 to 1895 were undertaken against various sections of this tribe.

In 1895 fifty friendly Yaos were enlisted as an experiment, and took part in the operations against Zarafi and Makanjira (Yao Chiefs) and the Arabs at North Nyasa. In every fight they were well to the front, and showed such sterling military qualities that it was decided to disband the Makua* and to replace them by Yaos.

Marimba.—The Marimba men are natives of Kota Kota, and are mostly a cross between coastmen and Achewa women. We tried twenty-five of them during 1895 as soldiers, and they turned out well. We have now one company of these men (120 rifles).

The Yaos are undoubtedly our best soldiers, as they have more self-reliance and character than the Atonga, and are more obedient than the Marimba and Atonga, and would be steadier in a critical situation. They are also better shots.

The native soldiers are all good marchers, and are very keen about soldiering. We have no difficulty in recruiting, and get the best men. All the native soldiers are enlisted for three years' service, with the option of re-engaging.

They have strong physiques, and are able to undergo severe hardships without loss of energy.

They are easily fed, as they live either on meal made from the native grains of the country or on rice, and only require salt to complete their rations.

They are a very cheap force, their rations costing only about 2*s.* 6*d.* a-month at the present time.

They receive 5*s.*, 7*s.*, and 10*s.* a-month pay in the respective rank of private, corporal, and sergeant. Their uniform only costs about 12*s.* a-year, and consists of a khaki nickerbocker suit, black fez and tassel, water-bottle, and blanket rolled and strapped round the body. In consequence, no transport is required for the kit of the native soldiers, and only a small quantity of rations are carried on service for use in emergencies.

The native soldiers are quick in learning their drill, notwithstanding the fact that they are being taught by Sikh Drill Instructors who cannot make themselves clearly understood. They are smart and anxious to excel, and their skirmishing and manual is distinctly good. The shooting is only moderate, but is improving.

It is difficult at first to get them to realize real discipline. By this I mean they cannot understand the chain of responsibility, and do not realize that an order given by any non-commissioned officer must be obeyed; in fact, they at first dislike obeying any orders but those given them direct by their British officers. The non-commissioned officers do not as yet understand or realize the responsibilities of their positions, and so cannot command their men as they should. This will take some time to teach, but when taught the native soldiers should be a most reliable and efficient force, especially if they will only learn to read and write in English and to keep simple accounts.

I hope, as soon as the men are thoroughly trained in their duties, to start a regimental school, in which English will be taught, and I am sure that the men themselves will be only too keen to learn.

In drill, marching, good behaviour, and also fighting qualities, these native soldiers compare very favourably with the fighting races of India; but it will be some time before they can be trusted to exercise command of a detachment or post, or to satisfactorily fulfil the responsible duties of non-commissioned officers.

In any case, until that time arrives it will be necessary to maintain a force of trained Indian soldiers in this country to supply the senior non-commissioned officers for the native companies, to act as drill instructors, to keep the accounts of stores, rations, &c., issued to the men, and also to take charge of all escorts, guards, detachments, posts, and forts in the absence of British officers.

Native buglers and drummers are getting on quickly. They have good ears for music.

The health of the native soldiers is excellent, and their conduct is good. Crime is very rare.

(Signed) C. A. EDWARDS, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*
Commanding Armed Forces in British Central Africa.

Head-quarters, Zomba, March 30, 1897.

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* Natives from Mozambique, who were for some time employed by the British Central Africa Administration in large numbers as soldiers and as police.